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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference 114622 EJH:ts	FOR FURTHER ACTION	See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416).	
International Application No. PCT/AU2005/000331	International Filing Date (day/month/year) 9 March 2005	Priority Date (day/month/year) 9 March 2004	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC			
Int. Cl. F16L 15/00 (2006.01) F16L 15/02 (2006.01) F16L 15/04 (2006.01) F16L 15/08 (2006.01)	F16L 25/12 (2006.01) F16L 27/08 (2006.01) F16L 27/087 (2006.01) F16L 27/12 (2006.01)	F16L 55/00 (2006.01) F16L 55/07 (2006.01)	
Applicant TINGLEWOOD TECHNOLOGIES PTY LTD et al			

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.

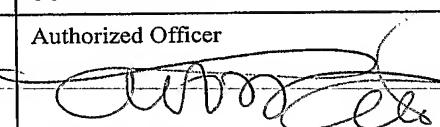
2. This REPORT consists of a total of 3 sheets, including this cover sheet.

This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of 11 sheet(s).

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

- I Basis of the report
- II Priority
- III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- IV Lack of unity of invention
- V Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- VI Certain documents cited
- VII Certain defects in the international application
- VIII Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 9 January 2006	Date of completion of the report 08 March 2006
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929	Authorized Officer  G.B. NATH Telephone No. (02) 6283 2126

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the elements of the international application:*

the international application as originally filed.

the description, pages 4-9, 11-12, as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
Pages 1,2, 3/1-3/3, 10/1,10/2, received on 10 January 2006 with the letter of 10 January 2006

the claims, pages , as originally filed,
pages , as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages 13-16, received on 10 January 2006 with the letter of 10 January 2006

the drawings, pages 1/8-8/8, as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages , received on with the letter of

the sequence listing part of the description:
pages , as originally filed
pages , filed with the demand
pages , received on with the letter of

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.
These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language which is:

the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).

the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).

the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

contained in the international application in written form.

filed together with the international application in computer readable form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.

furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.

The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.

The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished

4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

the description, pages

the claims, Nos.

the drawings, sheets/fig.

5. This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).**

* Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17).

** Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Claims 1-23	YES
	Claims None	NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims 1-23	YES
	Claims None	NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims 1-23	YES
	Claims None	NO

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7)

Documents:

D1: Derwent Abstract Accession No. 99-291011/25, Class Q67, JP 11094162 A (SEKISUI CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES CO. LTD) 9 April 1999

D2: Derwent Abstract Accession No., 1999-605489/52 Class Q67, JP 11264491A (OSAKA GAS CO. LTD) 28 September 1999

D3: CA 2296195A (HAYNES) 24 May 2001

D4: EP396029 B (MCGRAW) 30 September 1992

D5: US 4998756A (HART) 12 March 1991

2.1 Novelty and Inventive Step:

D1, D3 and D5 are the nearest prior art to the invention claimed, each of which disclose a pipe insert which is adjustable in length. However none of them disclose a pipe insert "which in use provide a connection between two spaced pipe ends....enabling the connection of an appliance between the pipe ends ... etc" (see present claim 1). Thus, none of the documents D1-D5 cited in the International Search Report or any combination of them can be considered to anticipate the invention as defined in claim 1.

The dependent claims concern further developments of the invention and are also considered to be novel and inventive.

Therefore, the claims 1-23 are considered to meet the criteria of Novelty, Inventive Step.

2.2 All the claims conform to the criteria of Industrial Applicability

"Pipe Insert"

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a pipe insert and also to a method of connecting at least two pipe ends using such a pipe insert.

5 Background

Process piping installations are common to many industries, including the oil and gas, petrochemical and mining industries.

A requirement associated with most major projects concerning such installations is that the piping be hydrostatically and/or pneumatically tested, prior to 10 pre-commissioning, so as to ensure conformity with design and operating parameters. Such testing is generally followed by a cleaning phase which may involve subsonic air blasting. Until the installation is commissioned, it is not desirable to expose control elements, such as valves and like elements, to the rigours that will be experienced during assembly of the installation, cleaning of the 15 assembled installation and testing of the installation prior to commissioning. Throughout the specification and claims the term "appliance" shall be taken as referring to control elements, such as valves, gauges, flow restrictors and like elements, which are installed in a fluid line in order to control and/or monitor the fluid flow through fluid line.

20 For this reason, it is not uncommon for such control elements to be installed and then removed as many as three times over the course of construction, testing and cleaning. This generally involves construction of purpose-built temporary pipe inserts to replace each control element. In installations which incorporate tens or hundreds of control elements, this practice is unwieldy and wasteful because, in 25 most instances, a new pipe insert is created each time for each control element and, where the installation is to be subjected to testing, each temporary insert must be fabricated to the same standards as the control element which it is intended to replace. Associated shortcomings in this regard include triple-

- 2 -

handling and installation, which compromises the mechanical integrity of the pipe system, as well as the need to subject the temporary inserts to non-destructive testing to ensure their fitness for use during testing and cleaning. This results in unnecessary expense, time delays and safety risks. In addition, there is an
5 increased likelihood of damage to the control elements each time they are installed and then removed.

Disclosure of the Invention

Throughout the specification and claims, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise" or variations such as "comprises" or "comprising", will be
10 understood to imply the inclusion of a stated integer or group of integers but not the exclusion of any other integer or group of integers.

According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a pipe insert which in use is to provide a connection between at least two spaced pipe ends which are fixed relative to each other, said pipe ends each having first connection
15 means enabling the connection of an appliance between the pipe ends, the insert in use being intended to replace the appliance and provide a fluid tight interconnection with each end, the insert having at least two ends, the pipe insert being adjustable to be able to vary the relative displacement between the ends, each end having second connecting means adapted in use to be sealing
20 interconnected with the first connecting means.

According to a preferred feature of the invention the pipe insert is able to accommodate at least some of the intended fluid flow between the pipe ends. According to a preferred feature of the invention the pipe insert constitutes a flow conduit between the ends. According to one embodiment the flow conduit
25 comprises an integral part of the pipe insert. According to another embodiment the flow conduit is of a flexible or extendable nature.

According to a preferred feature of the invention the pipe insert is adapted to receive at least one of a selection of flow control and/or sensing elements.

According to a preferred feature of the invention wherein the pipe insert incorporates a flow control and/or sensing elements.

According to a preferred feature of the invention the pipe insert is not able to accommodate flow between the pipe ends.

- 5 According to a preferred feature of the invention the pipe insert comprises a plurality of interengaged sections which are displaceable relative to each other to vary the relative displacement between the ends of the insert, and a sealing and locking means is provided between the sections, said locking means being capable of being released to permit relative longitudinal movement between the
- 10 sections.

According to a preferred feature of the invention insert wherein the sections accommodate for fluid flow between the flanges and are sealingly interconnected.

According to a preferred feature of the invention the sections are telescopingly interengaged.

- 15 According to a preferred feature of the invention the sections are threadably interengaged, whereby the relative displacement is varied by varying the relative longitudinal position of the threadable interconnection between the sections.

- 20 According to a preferred feature of the invention the second connecting means are removable from the ends and the second connecting means which are to affixed to the ends can be are selectable from a plurality of differing forms of second connecting means adapted to conform with the first connecting means of the pipe ends of differing sizes.

- 25 According to a preferred feature of the invention the first connecting means each comprise a flange at the respective pipe end and said second connecting means each comprise a flange at the respective end wherein the first and second connecting means are of a complementary form.

- 3/2 -

According to a preferred feature of the invention the ends of the insert are displaceable along a common axis.

According to a preferred feature of the invention the ends of the insert are displaceable along at least two axes which are angularly displaced from each
5 other.

According to a preferred feature of the invention are displaceable along two axes which are substantially perpendicular to each other.

According to a preferred feature of the invention the ends of the insert are displaceable along at least two axes which are spaced from each other.

10 According to a preferred feature of the invention the pipe insert is able to accommodate the flow and pressure conditions anticipated for the appliance in use.

According to a preferred feature of the invention the pipe insert is configured and such that it can accommodate the anticipated mechanical loadings anticipated to
15 be applied to the appliance in use.

According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of connecting at least two spaced pipe ends which are fixed relative to each other, said pipe ends each having first connection means enabling the connection of an appliance between the pipe ends, the method comprising the steps of:

20 providing an insert of the form as claimed at any one of the preceding claims between the at least two spaced pipe ends;

adjusting the length of insert to cause relative displacement between the ends of the insert according to the spacing between the pipe ends;

inserting the inset into the space between the pipe ends; and

- 3/3 -

connecting the insert to the pipe ends with the abutting first and second connecting means to provide a fluid tight interconnection therebetween.

The invention will be more fully understood in the light of the following description of specific embodiments.

5 Brief Description of the Drawings

The description is made with reference to the accompanying drawings of which:

supported by the outer radial face of the flange for sealing engagement with the inner bore of the larger section 102. Because of the telescoping nature of the connection sections 101 and 102 the length of the pipe insert can be varied as required. The annular seal cover 104 also serves as a locking means which is

5 able to resist relative longitudinal movement between the sections when it is tightly engaged when it is tightened.

There exist further embodiments wherein the number of outer sections provided to each side differs from that in connection with the first and second embodiments. Moreover, it will be appreciated that the number of outer sections provided to one

10 side of the central section may differ from the number provided to the other side.

Other embodiments exist wherein there is a transverse offset between the outer section(s) to one side of the central section and the outer section(s) to the other side of the central section to accommodate for circumstances where the pipe ends are out of coaxial alignment.

15 In addition, there exist alternative embodiments which are adapted to connect more than two pipe ends, for example inserts formed as tee-pieces or four-way pieces, those inserts being adjustable in some or all longitudinal axes, so as to vary the positions of the connectors according to the spacing of the pipe ends.

20 A further embodiment as shown schematically at Figure 7 comprises a situation where the pipe insert does not need to provide fluid communication between the pipe ends during the period of time that the pipe insert is to be in position between the pipe ends. As a result portion 210 between the flanges 212 comprises a member which is extendible and which has sufficient structural integrity to withstand the forces exerted thereon during the relevant activity.

25 A further embodiment as shown schematically at Figure 8 comprises a situation where the portion 310 of the pipe insert between the flanges does not provide full fluid communication between the pipe ends during the period of time that the pipe insert is to be in position between the pipe ends. As a result portion 310 between

- 10/2 -

the flanges 312 comprises a member which is extendible and which has sufficient structural integrity to withstand the forces exerted thereon during the relevant activity. To accommodate for the required fluid flow a flexible flow line 308

Claims

The claims defining the invention are as follows:

1. (amended) A pipe insert which in use is to provide a connection between at least two spaced pipe ends which are fixed relative to each other, said pipe ends each having first connection means enabling the connection of an appliance between the pipe ends, the insert in use being intended to extend across the space between the pipe ends to replace the appliance and provide a fluid tight interconnection with between each pipe end and the abutting end of the insert, the insert having at least two ends, the pipe insert being adjustable to be able to vary the relative displacement between the ends, each end having second connection means adapted in use to be sealing interconnected with the first connection means.
2. (amended) A pipe insert as claimed at claim 1 wherein the pipe insert is able to accommodate at least some of the intended fluid flow between the pipe ends.
- 15 3. A pipe insert as claimed at claim 2 wherein the pipe insert constitutes a flow conduit between the ends.
4. A pipe insert as claimed at claim 3 wherein the flow conduit comprises an integral part of the pipe insert.
5. A pipe insert as claimed at claim 3 wherein the flow conduit is of a flexible or 20 extendable nature.
6. A pipe insert as claimed at any one of claims 2 to 5 wherein the pipe insert is adapted to receive at least one of a selection of flow control and/or sensing elements.
- 25 7. A pipe insert as claimed at any one of claims 2 to 5 wherein the pipe insert incorporates a flow control and/or sensing elements.

- 14 -

8. A pipe insert as claimed at claim 1 wherein the pipe insert is not able to accommodate flow between the pipe ends.
9. (amended) A pipe insert as claimed at any one of the preceding claims wherein, the pipe insert comprises a plurality of interengaged sections which
5 are displaceable relative to each other to vary the relative displacement between the ends of the insert, and a locking means is provided between the sections, said locking means being capable of being released to permit relative movement between the sections.
10. (amended) A pipe insert as claimed at claim 9 as dependant upon claim 2
wherein the sections accommodate for fluid flow between the flanges and are
sealingly interconnected.
11. (amended) A pipe insert as claimed at claim 9 or 10 wherein the sections are telescopingly interengaged.
12. A pipe insert as claimed at claim 9 or 10 wherein, the sections are threadably
15 interengaged, whereby the relative displacement is varied by varying the relative longitudinal position of the threadable interconnection between the sections.
13. (amended) A pipe insert as claimed at any one of the preceding claims wherein the second connection means are removable from the ends and the
20 second connection means which are to be affixed to the ends can be selectable from a plurality of differing forms of second connection means adapted to conform with the first connection means of the pipe ends of differing sizes.
14. A pipe insert as claimed at any one of the preceding claims wherein the ends
25 of the insert are displaceable along a common axis.

- 15 -

15. A pipe insert as claimed at any one of claims 1 to 13 wherein the ends of the insert are displaceable along at least two axes which are angularly displaced from each other.

16. (amended) A pipe insert as claimed at claim 15 wherein the ends of the insert
5 are displaceable along two axes which are substantially perpendicular to each other.

17. A pipe insert as claimed at any one of claims 1 to 13 wherein the ends of the insert are displaceable along at least two axes which are spaced from each other.

10 18. A pipe inset substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

19. (amended) A method of connecting at least two spaced pipe ends which are fixed relative to each other, said pipe ends each having first connection means enabling the connection of an appliance between the pipe ends, the method
15 comprising the steps of:

providing an insert of the form as claimed at any one of the preceding claims between the at least two spaced pipe ends;

adjusting the length of insert to cause relative displacement between the ends of the insert according to the spacing between the pipe ends;

20 inserting the inset into the space between the pipe ends; and

connecting the insert to the pipe ends with the abutting first and second connection means to provide a fluid tight interconnection therebetween.

20. A method substantially of connecting at least two spaced pipe ends as herein described.

- 16 -

21.(new) A pipe insert as claimed at any one of claims 1 to 17 wherein the first connection means each comprise a flange at the respective pipe end and said second connection means each comprise a flange at the respective end wherein the first and second connection means are of a complementary form.

5 22.(new) A pipe insert as claimed any one of claims 1 to 17 and claim 21 wherein the pipe insert is able to accommodate the flow and pressure conditions anticipated for the appliance in use.

10 23.(new) A pipe insert as claimed any one of claims 1 to 17 and claim 21 and 22 wherein the pipe insert is configured and such that it can accommodate the anticipated mechanical loadings anticipated to be applied to the appliance in use.